

# Partnership Prevents Child Abandonment

## Challenge

In Romania's orphanages, eighty-six percent of the children who are abandoned have at least one parent still living. The National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption in Romania estimates that there are 100,000 children living in orphanages - the majority have been left by poor mothers or families who feel that they cannot adequately provide for a child.



Photo: USAID/Jay Sorensen

Roma mother and daughter

***“The partnership that we’ve formed with the Orthodox Church and local government child protection agencies is an effective way to help get children back to their homes.”***

***- IOCC Program  
Coordinator Nicholas Chakos***

13-43% lower than average rates in seven other counties not receiving assistance. The program is present in thirty-three of forty-two counties in Romania, serving around 10,000 children and their families. According to IOCC Program Coordinator Nicholas Chakos, “Our network of social workers and especially our community support groups provide abandoned children, and families at risk of abandoning their children, with important alternatives to orphanages.”

## Initiative

To address this crisis, USAID is funding a \$15 million partnership program for five years with World Learning and Romania's National Authority for Child Protection and Adoption.

One of the project's activities, designed by International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) and the Romanian Orthodox Church, helps Romanian families become economically stable through job skills development and temporary assistance. Community support groups provide long-term guidance and assistance through coping strategies for parents and families who are reintegrating or adopting children.

Prevention is another key part of the program. In the village of Punghina, many children are malnourished and young mothers have little experience in caring for their children. A “Day Center” was created in Punghina to train twenty-four young mothers on basic child care skills. The Center also provides daycare services for the mothers so that they can work during the day.

## Results

An independent evaluation of child welfare in Romania recently found that “rates of abandonment for children aged 0-2 years” in counties receiving USAID assistance are